INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD

ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD

Over the last 80 years, a worldwide system for control of drugs of abuse has developed gradually through the adoption of a series of international treaties. The important multilateral conventions currently in force are the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 (1961 Convention), as amended by the 1972 Protocol; the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 (1971 Convention) and, adopted in 1988, the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988 Convention). Each successive treaty brought complementary regulations and advances in international law. From the beginning, the basic aim of the international drug control treaties has been to limit the use of drugs to medical and scientific purposes only.

The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB or Board) is the independent and quasi-judicial control organ for the implementation of the United Nations drug conventions, established in 1968 by the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961. It had predecessors under the former drug conventions since the time of the League of Nations.

The Board is independent of Governments as well as of the United Nations; its 13 members serve in their personal capacity. They are elected by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and their work is financed by the United Nations. Three members are elected from a list of candidates nominated by WHO and 10 from a list nominated by Governments.

Mandate

It is the Board's responsibility to promote government compliance with the provisions of the drug control treaties and to assist them in this effort. The Board's tasks are laid down in the treaties. Broadly speaking, the Board deals with two aspects of drug control:

- With regard to licit manufacture, commerce and sale of drugs, the Board endeavours to ensure that adequate supplies are available for medical and scientific uses, and that leakages from licit sources to illicit traffic do not occur. To this end, it administers an estimates system for narcotic drugs and a voluntary assessment system for psychotropic substances, and monitors international trade in drugs through the statistical returns system. The Board also monitors government control over chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs, and assists them in preventing diversion of these chemicals into illicit traffic.
- With respect to illicit manufacture and trafficking of drugs, the Board identifies where weaknesses in the national and international control systems exist and contributes to correcting the situation. Further, the Board is responsible for assessing chemicals used to illicitly manufacture drugs, for possible international control.

Membership

The members, with mandates expiring on 1 March of the year indicated, are:

Gottfried Machata	Austria	1997
Huáscar Cajias Kauffmann	Bolivia	1995
Zhi-Ji Cai	China*	1995
Mohammed Abbas Mansour	Egypt	1995
Oskar Schröder	Germany	1995
M. V. N. Rao	India	1995
Sirad Atmodjo	Indonesia*	1997
Abdol-Hamid Ghodse	Iran (Islamic Republic of)*	1997
Manuel Quijano Narezo	Mexico	1997
Raoof Ali Khan	Pakistan	1997
Mohsen Kchouk	Tunisia	1995
Bunsom Martin	Thailand	1997
Herbert Okun	United States of America	1997

*Elected by ECOSOC from among nominees submitted by WHO.

Secretariat

The secretariat is located at the Vienna International Centre, P.O. Box 500, A-1400 Vienna, Austria. telephone: 211310; telefax: 232156 and 2309788; telex: 135612.

The secretary is Herbert Schaepe.

Scope of international drug control

Two categories of drugs, narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, are controlled by the international drug control treaties:

- At present, control is exercised over more than 116 narcotic drugs under the 1961 Convention. They include mainly natural products such as opium and its derivatives, morphine, codeine and heroin, but also synthetic narcotics such as methadone and pethidine, as well as cannabis and cocaine.
- Some 105 psychotropic substances are controlled by the 1971 Convention. Most of them are contained in pharmaceutical products acting on the central nervous system. Broadly speaking, these are the hallucinogens, the stimulants and the depressants and some analgesics.

The measures of control that these two Conventions prescribe vary in strictness from one group of drugs to another. For this purpose, drugs are listed in various schedules annexed to the Conventions according to the differences in their dependence-producing properties, their therapeutic value and their risk of abuse. The United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND or the Commission), a functional Commission of ECOSOC, has the power to determine whether a new drug should be listed, or whether a listed drug should be transferred to another schedule or deleted. In so doing, the Commission must take into account the findings and recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO).

Besides the control of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, both of which are dependence-causing substances, international drug control has been extended by the 1988 Convention to 22 chemicals frequently used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances.

Control of narcotic drugs

The international system of controlling the licit movement of narcotic drugs under the 1961 Convention functions in a generally statisfactory manner, and licitly produced or manufactured drugs usually do not constitute a source for illicit traffic. The fact that the system generally works well is mainly due to the estimates system that covers all countries whether or not parties to the Convention. Countries are under an obligation not to exceed the amounts of the estimates confirmed or established by the Board.

The Board, in cooperation with WHO, publishes reports on the supply of and demand for opiates for medical and scientific needs. The reports analyse the production of opiate raw materials and the consumption of opiates. They also make recommendations to Governments, professional associations and medical instructors, aimed at minimizing, if not overcoming, impediments to ensure adequate availability of opiates for treatment and management of severe pain.

Control of psychotropic substances

The 1971 Convention came into force in 1976. In contrast to illicit traffic in narcotic drugs, which are obtained from illicit production and manufacture, psychotropic substances are often obtained through diversions from legitimate manufacture. These diversions stem mainly from inadequate legislation in a number of manufacturing and exporting countries and the lack of advance information on actual medical and scientific requirements. Millions of dosage units of such unwanted substances have thus been "exported" to countries that had no use for them, and end up being abused worldwide.

Acting on recommendations made by INCB in 1980, 1981 and 1991, ECOSOC requested all Governments to provide the Board with an assessment of their actual requirements for medical and scientific purposes of internationally controlled psychotropic substances. Today, approximately 170 Governments provide the Board with such information, at least for the more dangerous psychotropic substances. These figures are published regularly by the Board. Diversion of legitimately manufactured substances has already been significantly reduced, because the authorities of exporting countries can now easily check whether the orders they receive tally with the real needs of importing countries. When in doubt, exporting countries consult INCB.

Control of precursor and essential chemicals used to illicitly manufacture drugs

Article 12 of the 1988 Convention introduced a number of control measures on various substances frequently used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The article entrusted the Board with the responsibilities of monitoring the implementation by Governments of the control measures over such substances and assessing chemical substances for possible international control. The Board reports yearly to the Commission on government implementation of that article.

A databank has been established to enable INCB to make full use of the information furnished by Governments and obtained from other sources. This databank is used both to assist the Board in assessing substances for possible control, and as a tool to help Governments prevent diversion of precursor and essential chemicals to the illicit manufacture of drugs.

Evaluation and support of national efforts

By examining and analysing the information it receives from some 190 countries and territories, INCB monitors whether the treaties are being applied throughout the world in as an effective a manner as possible. Through its continuous evaluation of national efforts, INCB may be able to recommend actions and suggest adjustments to both international and national control regimes. In appropriate cases, the Board may recommend to the competent United Nations organs, to specialized agencies and Governments that technical and/or financial assistance be provided in support of the Governments' efforts to comply with their treaty obligations.

Dialogue with Governments

In order to further the aims of the treaties, the Board maintains ongoing discussions with Governments. Such dialogues are pursued through regular consultations and through missions arranged in agreement with the Governments concerned. As a result, for example, countries became parties to the conventions and have strengthened their legislation, particularly concerning psychotropic substances, or have improved coordination of national drug control efforts.

The Board has repeatedly stressed that real and lasting progress in the fight against drug abuse and trafficking depends on the strong commitment of Governments, the establishment of priorities and the allocation of adequate resources by national authorities, since they and they alone are able to take the necessary measures within their countries. To achieve maximum impact, all such national endeavours must be coordinated at both regional and worldwide levels.

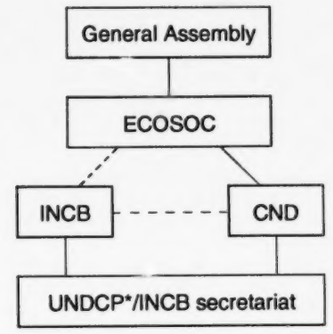
Training programmes

In order to enhance the functioning of national drug control administrations, the INCB secretariat conducts training programmes for drug control administrators, particularly from developing countries. These officials receive training in the implementation of treaty obligations, especially those that relate to cooperation between INCB and parties to the treaties. Regional training seminars have not only helped to improve cooperation from participating countries but have also served to enhance collaboration among countries within the regions. These seminars are organized in close cooperation with the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and other competent international organizations, in particular WHO and the International Criminal Police Organization. National administrations also send officials to the INCB secretariat for training.

Annual report

Based on its activities, INCB publishes an annual report that is submitted to ECOSOC through the Commission. The report provides a comprehensive survey of the drug control situation in various parts of the world. As an impartial body, INCB tries to identify and predict dangerous trends and suggests necessary measures to be taken. The annual report is supplemented by technical reports on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, giving a detailed account of estimates of annual legitimate requirements in each country as well as data, the licit production, manufacture, trade and consumption of these drugs worldwide.

United Nations system and drug control organs and their secretariat



Key:

——— Direct connection (administrative or constitutional);

- - - - Reporting, cooperating and advising relationship.

*In accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/179 of 21 December 1990, the secretariat of INCB has been fully integrated into UNDCP.

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